Hundreds march for a safer Heights

Sarah Wolf

On Sunday, June 14, another peaceful and powerful rally brought hundreds of Heights residents together in unity with the Black Lives Matter movement. Organized by Safer Heights, a grassroots activist group, the event began with speakers at Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park who then led legions of chanting and sign-carrying participants through Coventry Village, down Mayfield Road to Superior Road. The march paused outside of Christ Our Redeemer AME Church, where participants took a knee for a moment of silence. Then several speakers shared stories about their experiences as black members of the Cleveland Heights community, and called for systemic changes in policing.

The march then continued down Superior Road, looping back to Coventry P.E.A.C.E. Park, where organizers addressed the large and enthusiastic crowd, thanking community partners and volunteers who helped make the day a success.

Everyone was invited to stay for a picnic, with food provided by participants and local eateries. Via Facebook, Safer Heights has asked that anyone who would be willing to share pictures or videos of the rally e-mail them to saferheights@gmail.com.

Sarah Wolf is a marketing VISTA at FutureHeights, a resident of Cleveland Heights, and a graduate-level community practice student at MSASS/CUWl Women’s Reserve University.

Lee Road gym hosts ‘I Can’t Breathe’ tribute-fundraiser

Nicole Tugeau

On Saturday, June 13, CrossFit I/O on Lee Road in Cleveland Heights hosted a fundraiser and tribute workout dedicated to George Floyd and his family. More than 75 all-ages athletes participated in the socially distanced event, held in the gym’s parking lot.

The more than $17,000 raised will be matched by a corporate sponsor and distributed equally to these nonprofits dedicated to racial equity: Audre Lorde Project Inc., Black Lives Matter Foundation Fund, Race Forward, and the National Urban League.

Angelo Rogers, a first-responder and owner of Crossfit I/O, acted quickly to turn Rogers’ idea into a Heights community event. CrossFit I/O members, along with their friends and family, were

Game encourages shopping in CH

Jessica Schantz

As Heights businesses reopen to in-person customers, the city of Cleveland Heights has devised a game to encourage local shopping—Shop Local Bingo.

Featured businesses are selected randomly, said Mary Trupu, director of communications and public engagement for Cleveland Heights, “with emphasis put on diversity of locations.” The first round featured restaurants, bars, and grocers, with other types of businesses to be included in future rounds, as more reopen.

Each game card, available for download at www.clevelandheights.org/299/Shop-Local-Bingo, features 24 Cleveland Heights businesses. The aim is to fill any line on the card—horizontal, vertical, or diagonal—as in the classic game. To do so, participants purchase goods from listed businesses (online or in-store), then take pictures of themselves holding both their purchases and receipts. Per the city’s instructions, “Once you have a Bingo, send all of your pictures in one e-mail to bingo@clvhts.com, or send a direct message to Instagram (@cleveland-heights) or our Facebook (Cleveland-heights) with all your pics. Be sure to attach your marked card as well!”

Submissions will be entered into weekly drawings for what the city describes as “a Cleveland Heights dinner/dessert/beverage/groceries experience on us—a $50 value to your choice of featured business—two $25 gift cards.” The city is purchasing the gift cards.

“This is the city’s effort to further

University Heights enacts anti-discrimination law

Mike Cook

For members of University Heights City Council and Mayor Michael Dylan Brennan, enacting an anti-discrimination law pertaining to sexual orientation wasn’t just important. It was personal.

At the June council meeting, Council Member John Rach said he hopes to see other cities follow the lead of University Heights. “I hope this resonates across the country,” Rach said, “so that I, too, one day can work anywhere in the country and not feel the pressure of one day losing my job because of who

For the second year in a row, the rainbow flag flew outside University Heights for the entire month of June.
How we move forward together

Michael Dylan Brennan

Four hundred and one years ago, the first Africans arrived to this continent. Brought here in chains.

As children we are taught the mythology that the Pilgrims, Puritan, English, and the colonists came to America for freedom. But that is far from the whole story. The freedom of the colonists was made possible by the labor of the enslaved.

This nation was founded claiming certain self-evident truths, that we are all created equal, and endowed by our creator with unalienable rights: life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness. Lofty words written by a man who owned 600 slaves over the course of his life. The paradox of this equality was that it was not for everyone.

That has changed over time, but not enough. Slavery was ended, civil rights acts were enacted, but this country has yet to extend the full benefits of American citizenship and society to all of its people.

On June 23, local students organized a rally in University Heights. The stated purpose of the event was to honor the Black lives lost to police brutality and white supremacy. The young activists aimed to start a conversation between the citizens and elected officials of University Heights about policy reform and the creation of initiatives that will create more anti-racist and equitable community.

Here in University Heights you may consider this conversation started and underway.

As mayor, I have signed the pledge to review the police department's Use of Force policies. Council Member and Safety Committee Chair Saundra Berry and I have created a citizen's advisory council. This advisory council will help the labs input and review our city police department's Use of Force policies. The committee will meet over the summer, make a report of its findings, and suggest reforms.

There is a lot of talk these days about people trying to erase history, usually in connection with taking people, the statues of Confederates and other white supremacists, or discounting racist marketing and brands. But we know better than to think history can be changed. There is no changing the history of what white colonists and the first generations of white Americans did to people of color, to indigenous people, to Asian people, and to Black people, especially.

But how we move forward—that is in our hands. Let us move forward, together, starters, fairness, the understanding, all with a relentless pursuit of justice. Let us work together for a better and equitable country. Let us fulfill the promise, and be the best this country claimed to be at its founding—now—for people of color and for Black Americans especially.

Michael Dylan Brennan is the mayor of University Heights.

Resident recalls interactions with CH police

Lee Batdorff

In 2014, my partner and I headed home on the East Shoreway when two packs of Cleveland Police cruisers zipped by us at frightening speed. I needed police radio news told of more than 20 police cruisers chasing a speeding car into East Cleveland, ending up in a middle school parking lot, with an unmarked police car inside the car killed by 137 bullets.

A newspaper photo of the wind shield, with dozens of bullet holes in it, tagged with numbers, still haunts me. I recall a man on the roof of a building at the corner of Lancashire and Coventry roads, watching people on the street with binoculars. Cops were driving across the U.S. nights. I decided to wait until they were gone to tell Munchkin that the police were on to his marijuana (which he had given to me, right away). When I was going to tell Munchkin what Lovequist had said, right away. When I saw him next, he was with a group of young travelers from Montreal, who were driving across the U.S.

Lee Batdorff has been a Cleveland Heights resident since 1976.
CH demonstrates inequitable attention to housing problems

DEBORAH VAN KLEEF and CARLA RAUTENBERG
Heights of Democracy

In San Francisco or New York, a $480,000 teardown replaced by a more up-to-date home in a gentrifying area would not be unusual. That barely buys a run-down bungalow in those markets. But in Cleveland Heights, many residents were dismayed when the meticulously well-maintained 6-bedroom, 5-bath, 4,743-square-foot century home at 2224 Devonshire Drive in the Ambler Heights Historic District, which sold at that price, was demolished less than a year later.

The city’s Architectural Board of Review has approved plans for a large contemporary house to replace it. Residents are still scratching their heads at how Cleveland Heights could have caved about finally passing a landmark ordinance last year, then approved the demolition of a unique, historic structure.

At the other end of the city, members of Noble Neighbors have been fighting a different kind of battle for nearly two years. Finally, some frustrated neighbors complained to CH City Council. A dumpster and a portable outhouse defaced their block, they said, and rainwater from the gutterless structure threatened to swamp their properties. They feared an outsize addition and mismatched roof shingles would produce an eyesore. In response, the city created a staff team which meets weekly, working with the owner and contractor to ensure that they meet deadlines.

As longtime council-watchers, we have never before seen a task force created to handle a single problem property. We have to wonder: Why is the seemingly endless battle to save the housing stock in Noble—one-fifth of the city—heavily dependent on volunteers, while a special city team deals with one problem property in a mansion district? Why does it take a decade of complaints from middle-class residents to get action on a single blighted home? Does the landmark ordinance simply not apply to wealthy property owners, who can tear down and replace any house they choose? And does crime actually pay?

The famous diversity of Cleveland Heights is not just racial or ethnic, but also economic. As in the country at large, that can threaten democratic governance. Deborah Van Kleef and Carla Rautenberg are longtime residents of Cleveland Heights. Contact them at heightsdemocracy@gmail.com.
Teachers union election brings leadership change

Ari Klein

Cleveland Heights Teachers Union's spring election of officers resulted in Karen Rego, first vice president for the past four years, and I changing places. Rego was elected president, and I will serve as first vice president beginning July 1. Rego will be the fourth president of our local since 1970. Glen A. Altschuld, who died earlier this school year, served from 1970 to 1990; Tom Schmidt served from 1990 to 2012. I was president for the last eight years.

Rego has been teaching in our district for 18 years. She has limitless energy and has forged close relationships with our members. Most of her career was as a kindergarten teacher at Oxford, though she taught many other grades as well. Rego began her CH-UH career at Wiley, and is now at Monticello. She served as building steward at Oxford for many years. She is dependable, hard-working, and leads by example.

Stability in leadership is important to our members, as many teachers spend their entire careers in our district. Since I was hired in CH-UH, 32 years ago, I believe that there has been a new superintendent, on average, about every three years. I have worked under more principals than I can remember. Although there are some administrators who spend their entire careers in our district, most do not.

For most of our members, CH-UH is home, and where they want to work. But state law contributes to the lack of mobility in the teaching profession. If a teacher with 10 years of experience wants to take a job in a different school district, that new district is required to acknowledge only five years of experience when placing that teacher on its pay scale.

For teachers in hard-to-staff areas (for those who have sought-after coaching experience), the hiring district might offer a higher salary, an enhanced IRA, and other perks; not so for teachers.

Moving to a new school district may mean a shorter commute, but it usually means a financial loss. The result is that teachers with more than five years of experience usually stay with the same district for their entire careers. Administrators move freely from district to district without having to make the same long-term commitment.

Two of our union officers retired this year. One of them is Brian Schaner, a high school science teacher who served as [the union's] high school vice president. He started his teaching career in parochial schools, then left the profession to work as a lawyer for 15 years before returning to the classroom in 2001. Carolyn Pavel, high school French and Spanish teacher, will become the high school vice president.

Beth Rae, Noble Title 1 teacher and union elementary schools vice president, also retired. Rae spent most of her career at Coventry Elementary School, then Roxboro and Noble. Darrell Lausche, Title 1 lead Gearing, was elected to fill Rae's spot. Lausche had been serving as union secretary. Tiffany Underhill, science teacher at Monticello, was elected union secretary.

In another big change for our local, Monica Carter, our longtime office manager, will retire on July 1. Carter was the knowledgeable voice at the other end of the phone for anyone calling our office, and she did that, and much more, for 26 years.

Carter is like family for many of our members. Her late husband, Michael, worked as a security monitor and coach in the district, and served for many years as an officer and negotiator for our union.

Although there are changes in our local leadership, there is continuity. Eight of 10 officers remain as generally elected union officials. The 10 elected officers are the guiding force behind the decisions that are made and the direction of our local.

It has been my honor to serve as president, but I attribute any success I had in that role to the support of my team and colleagues. I have every confidence that Karen Rego will do the same for our union.

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Ari Klein is a lifelong community member, math teacher at Cleveland Heights High School, and president of the Cleveland Heights Teachers Union.
Hard times for schools are here

Susie Kaeser

For whatever reason, I weep at parades. Predictably, my tears began to flow as a police-led parade of public school teachers turned right off of Taylor Road onto Euclid Heights Boulevard, where I was cheering, at an acceptable distance, with seven Monticello Middle School students who missed their school and missed their teachers.

It was the last day of an eerie, remote, and separate two months of learning and teaching from home. The end of a school year is a moment to celebrate hard work, progress, relationships, trust, freedom, and the future. This year was different, more subdued, with an overlay of worry and uncertainty. But we did it nonetheless—from the safe distance of automobiles decked out with balloons, signs, pink flamingos, and the Heights tiger.

Monticello staff created a three-block-long car caravan. Each vehicle had the name of the teacher written on the car, along with words of encouragement, affection, and good cheer directed to the students they had been teaching and reaching, but not in person. Just being visible had to qualify as connection. It was both uplifting and devastating. It signified just how strange this whole thing is, and how important relationships are!

Teachers play a significant role in the lives of our children and community, and nothing can stop them from finding ways to continue the work that gives their lives meaning, supports their families, and contributes to the health and development of our young people.

If you are not directly connected to our schools, it’s hard to know exactly how far teachers are willing to go to serve our children. Fortunately, the kids across the street, and the teaching staff that I work with to run the Reaching Heights summer music camp, give me valuable evidence. These music educators, like their peers, are passionate about education, willing to go the extra mile to reach their students, and determined to inspire their students to make the effort needed to excel—even in a pandemic.

We need to stand by our teachers, because they stand by our kids. Our community benefits from their professionalism and dedication, despite, at times like this, overwhelming odds. Their can-do, must-do, how-can-we-make-it-work spirit requires us to invest in this cornerstone institution.

So where will we go from here? We are facing a school-funding crisis. The levy defeat means there will be no new funds to solve budget problems, and there are plenty of them. State policy requires local school districts to pay private-school tuition for students who ask for a voucher. Before the pandemic, the district faced a financial chasm of $7.5 million inflicted by the relentless increase in voucher costs. Despite the pandemic, the Ohio Legislature did not stop the growth of vouchers, so next year our community’s annual voucher bill will top $10 million. To make things worse, the loss of state tax revenue caused the governor to cut $1.4 million in state funding to our district for the 2020 school year, and at least that much for the following year.

How are we to cope with rising costs mandated by state policy and shrinking state funding? For one thing, making schools safer will certainly cost more.

The CARES Act offered some relief. It sent $700 million in federal aid to K-12 education in our community; more than $700,000 of it went to 11 private schools located within the CH-UH City School District, leaving only $1.2 million for public schools. This was not enough to make whole the $1.4 million loss of state funds for 2020.

At the time of this writing, the U.S. Senate is sitting on the HEROES Act, which would send a desperately needed lifeline to public schools for the year ahead. Without it, we are toast!

We have to get back to school. We have to do it in new ways. We have to invest more in making it work, but the funds are not there.

What are we willing to do to staunch the bleeding, to create real opportunity, to ensure an inspired solution to a deadly problem? Without a substantial infusion of funds, next year’s end-of-school parade of cars carrying Monticello staff will be much shorter. Hard times are here.

Susie Kaeser is a 40-year resident of Cleveland Heights and the former director of Reaching Heights. She is active in the Heights Coalition for Public Education and the League of Women Voters.

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Susie Kaeser

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"I love First Baptist Church since it is a place where all are welcome"

Daniel B.
Local animals show support during pandemic

Michael Bier

Although I wouldn’t consider myself a humorist, I do appreciate a good laugh and often favor satire as a way of adding levity to a heavy situation. This is what prompted me recently to write a short story to post on NextDoor. It was a success, with many neighbors appreciating the humor, but creating the piece was equally satisfying.

After writing a first draft, I started to get a bit of interest from my wife and daughter, but the idea wasn’t grabbing them. The story needed the right visual to make it click. I started with the Internet, hoping to find an image of an animal standing at a podium; no luck. Not being a Photoshop expert, I decided to capture my own photo.

I quickly put together a “podium,” roughly sizing it to the intended user. My daughter created the podium’s medal with the help of her remote-controlled camera, and waited. After a surprisingly long time, given the attractiveness of the bait, my subject arrived and became the star of my story.

Upon posting it, the reaction was uplifting—lots of laughing emojis and positive comments. One guy messaged me stating he was forwarding the story to friends in Europe. Enjoy.

March 23, 2020; Grandview Avenue, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

In an unprecedented display of solidarity, Cleveland Heights-area wildlife today issued a statement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In part, the statement read, “We understand that sometimes the atmosphere from the Forest Hill neighborhood, nominated “spokesanimal,” a squirrel graphed public statement. Led by the Avenue yard for a well-choreographed public statement. Led by the nominated “spokesanimal,” a squirrel from the Forest Hill neighborhood, the statement was read amid some atmosphere.

“We understand that sometimes people get annoyed with our behavior, and often the feeling is mutual,” the squirrel read. “But we think it’s important for everyone to know that, in these trying times, the local animal community stands with our neighbors.”

Many area residents were surprised but comforted by the unusual coalition. “Seeing all of those animals standing together behind that podium was a very emotional moment for me. The deer, squirrels, raccoons, skunks, even the coyotes were there. I never knew, until this moment, how much they cared about us,” said a Queenston Road resident, who watched the event on YouTube from the safety of her living room.

“There have been many times when I have cursed the deer running rampant on my street, but how can I hold a grudge after such a display of encouragement for people like me? It was beautiful,” stated a Derbyshire Road resident.

Garnering the support from all local animal species was said to have taken considerable effort. “It was all or nothing; I mean, it wouldn’t look sincere if everyone but the skunk was onboard,” stated a chipmunk, revealing some of the tension behind the historic event.

“Look, all I’m saying is, sometimes I get the feeling I’m not welcome here in the Heights,” a skunk explained. “But in the end, I admit, if it weren’t for human trash on treelawns, I would have a tough time making it here, so I eventually voted to go along with the idea.”

The LAPH statement concluded with words of optimism and encouragement: “We, too, have seen times of trial, times of fear and times of want; but with every long, cold winter, comes a nourishing spring, with vegetable gardens to plunder, trash bags to invade and shrubbery to ravish; have faith, human friends, your days of plenty will return.”

Michael Bier is a graduate of Heights High and a member of the Future Heights Board of Directors.
Cleveland Heights City Council Meeting highlights

JUNE 1, 2020

Council members present [remotely] were Mayor Jason Stein, Vice Mayor Kohl Seren, Mary Dunbar, Michael Yasinow, and Michael Ungar. Also present were Council Manager Tonisha Biley, Clerk of Council Amy Hammonds, and Law Director William Hanna.

Public comments

Twenty-one residents sent 24 emails regarding Ordinance 54-2020 on the use of public wireless devices and wireless想 wireless support structures. Alexandra Rothchild of Cleveland Heights summarized the concerns expressed about small cell wireless facilities: potential interference and damage to existing facilities, privacy, health, safety, and property valuation issues, and lack of oversight by municipal officials.

Wired infrastructure on public ways

Ordinance 54-2020, which would amend Chapter 943 of the code, “Use of Public Ways for Small Cell Wireless Devices and Wireless Support Structures,” was removed from the consent agenda and presented on first reading, with no vote, because it requires additional research.

Law Director Hanna provided lengthy commentary for the legislation, which involves regulation of small cell facilities for fifth-generation (5G) technology. Current technology is 4G, but greater capacity is needed as Internet usage expands. Antennas are on public rights-of-way across the country, but Ohio law has concerning limitations.

The four finalists were selected from 22 original applicants, three of whom were interviewed remotely.

Finalists, Craig Cobb, Anthony Himmelein, and Michael Ungar. Also present were Council Manager Tonisha Biley, Clerk of Council Amy Hammonds, and Law Director William Hanna.

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Finalists, Craig Cobb, Anthony Himmelein, and Michael Ungar. Also present were Council Manager Tonisha Biley, Clerk of Council Amy Hammonds, and Law Director William Hanna.
TOH breaks ground in June 24 ceremony

From left: CH Mayor Jason Stein, Council Member Melody Joy Hart, Economic Development Director Tim Baland, City Manager Tanisha Briley, Council Member Donna Russell, Council Member Mike Ungar, school district Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby, Vice Mayor Kohli Shereen.

Tim Baland

The city of Cleveland Heights and development partner Flaherty & Collins held a ceremonial groundbreaking event on June 24 for the newly underway Ascent at the Top of the Hill (TOH), a mixed-use development.

CH City Council members, city officials, the developer, and representatives from the Cedar Fairmount Special Improvement District and the Cleveland Heights-University Heights school district participated in the event.

The four-acre project site is located on Cedar Road and Euclid Heights Boulevard, just up the hill from University Circle.

Construction is expected to be completed within an 18- to 24-month single-phase construction cycle. The general contractor on the project is Cleveland Construction.

Earlier this year, Cleveland Heights City Council unanimously approved the final financing for the $83,000,000 project. The city anticipates significant economic benefits from TOH. It projects that the project will generate more than $13,500,000 in new taxes and compensation for the CH-UH school district, over a 30-year period.

“We are excited to move forward with this transformative project that has been years in the making,” City Manager Tanisha Briley noted. “This development represents a major new investment for Cleveland Heights and positions the city for additional growth and development in the future. I am pleased that even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to advance this important development.”

Ascent at the Top of the Hill is expected to include 261 market-rate luxury apartments, more than 11,000 square feet of first-floor commercial/retail/restaurant space, close to 25,000 square feet of green space, and a structured parking garage. Plans include amenities such as first-floor co-working space, a pet spa, a dog park, indoor bicycle parking with a bike-wash station, a fitness center, and a rooftop pool, terrace and common space for socializing.

More information can be found at www.clevelandheights.com/toh.

Janet Kious, a resident of Cleveland Heights since 1974, raised four children here with her husband. She is the founder of GardenWalk Cleveland Heights.

GardenWalk Cleveland Heights, a free, self-guided tour of private and public gardens in the city, began in 2019. This year, due to the coronavirus, the tour will be conducted virtually.

Throughout the summer and fall, gardeners in Cleveland Heights are invited to upload videos (five minutes or less) or photographs of their gardens, both flower and vegetable, to the Cleveland Heights Garden Walk Facebook page (www.facebook.com/heightsgardenwalk/).

2020 CH GardenWalk will be virtual tour

Janet Kious

Gardeners are invited to share pictures of works in progress, small areas of special creativity within a larger space, unique plants, water features—anything that will show off what they have done, and bring joy to others.

(If you experience difficulty uploading to the Facebook page, you can instead e-mail your video or photographs to janetkious@sbcglobal.net.)

Jan Kious, a resident of Cleveland Heights since 1974, raised four children here with her husband. She is the founder of GardenWalk Cleveland Heights.
Community News

COURTESY DEBRA FRANKE

Some Bradford path volunteers (from left): John Barber, Emma Shook, Eran Shiloh, Donald Vicarel, Debra Franke, Gary Franke.

Friends start work to preserve and restore Bradford path

Debra Franke

The Bradford Cinder Path is buzzing with activity. Strollers and dog walkers, joggers and families all share the path. It’s the perfect place to learn to ride a bicycle. During a normal school year, it’s a great shortcut to get to school.

A group of neighbors, Friends of the Bradford Cinder Path, have come together, united in the desire to prepare the path for its second century. (See the related June 2020 Heights Observer article, “A look back and ahead at the Bradford cinder path,” by Marian Morton and Peggy Spaeth.)

The volunteers plan to partner with the city and its neighbors to preserve the path’s mature trees and replace invasive plants with carefully selected native trees and shrubs. They intend to retain the path’s shady beauty, and create a long-term plan for the maintenance of this much-loved path.

A small, recent change was the removal of invasive plants from around two large red oak trees (Quercus rubra) in the Princeton-Canterbury section of the path. Measurements were taken of the circumference of both trees, and the volunteers confidently report that these two trees have been in place much longer than the path. The current estimate is that the oak at the Canterbury end of the path is more than 200 years old; based on its diameter, it could be 230 years old.

Most of the plants removed were buckthorn, brought by Europeans to America as an ornamental shrub. This is one of the most-invasive plants in Ohio, and the Bradford path is overrun with it. It grows in a variety of conditions, and crowds out native plants. It is spread by seeds, and can grow as tall as 20 feet. Its leaves emerge early, and it keeps its leaves longer than other plants in the fall, further crowding them out.

Buckthorn also is not a source of nutrients to native birds, bees and other pollinators. For them, a stand of buckthorn is a green desert, and buckthorn berries have a laxative effect that can cause death in birds.

Cutting the plant back doesn’t help, because it will just vigorously grow back. Specific techniques have been developed to remove it. They include pulling out small buckthorns, including the roots; using a special tool called a Weed Wrench (one can be borrowed from the Home Repair Resource Center’s tool library); and smothering the plant by covering it with heavy black plastic, to block all light. Removing buckthorn from the cinder path is going to be a long process. As it is removed, volunteers will be planting suitable alternative native shrubbery.

For more information about the Bradford Cinder Path, and to volunteer, contact Friends of the Bradford Cinder Path by e-mail, at friends.bradford.cinder.path@gmail.com.

Debra Franke is a five-year resident of Cleveland Heights. She and her husband selected Cleveland Heights as their retirement home, and moved here from York, Pa. In retirement, Franke has time to indulge her interest in gardening.
Food pantry serves 300 families weekly

Paul Jenkins and Roy Gonzalez

Every Tuesday morning for the last seven years, dedicated volunteers from Forest Hill Presbyterian Church and the surrounding neighborhood have gathered at the church to unload trucks and vans full of donations for Abundance Food Pantry. For six hours, these hardworking volunteers pack about 60 pounds of food per family into bags and boxes, which currently are distributed to about 300 households each week.

In 2019, these donations provided enough groceries for 420,000 meals. By working with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Abundance Food Pantry has been able to reduce its cost to 4 cents per meal, and offer many healthy choices, with more than 35 percent being fresh produce.

Getting these groceries to the church requires another dedicated volunteer team, with five pickup trucks and one van making multiple trips.

Greater Cleveland Food Bank is the primary source of the groceries, which include meat, dairy products, vegetables, fruit, dry goods, bread, and hygiene items. Additional food donations include Zagara Marketplace, Save-a-Lot, Heinen’s, Panera’s, and Bruegger’s Bagels. Funding comes from Harvest for Hunger, United Way, church groups, and individuals.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, the pantry’s procedures had to change. Pantry organizers, who previously came inside for food, now must stay in their cars, to reduce exposure for all, and groceries are placed directly in their trunks. The pantry also asks that customers wear masks when they provide their name and other information required by the USDA.

All volunteers wear masks and gloves, and have their temperatures checked at the beginning of the day. Hands are washed and sanitized frequently. All touched surfaces are disinfected before and after each pantry event. Older and more-at-risk volunteers have decided to stay at home.

Abundance Food Pantry volunteers loading food into trunks of customers' cars.

Abundance Food Pantry has been able to reduce its cost to 4 cents per meal, and offer many healthy choices, with more than 35 percent being fresh produce. A mask when they provide their name and other information required by the USDA.

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Abundance Food Pantry volunteers loading food into trunks of customers' cars.

CH Senior Center News

Amy Jenkins

Senior center staff have been working hard to continue to provide services while the building is closed. Social work outreach and nutrition support remain a focus, but programming is also an important component of the center’s offerings. Employees are working to develop online content, knowing that low-tech programming is important.

One such effort is the formation of Stronger Together, an aptly named journaling group. Starting in May, members received a personalized journal, pen and topic. Participants meet, via a Webex call, on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m., to share experiences and anything written during the week. The talk is lively, and the social connection is appreciated. The most recent topic was “Memorial Day 2021”, an attempt to create a vision of what Memorial Day will look like next year. One participant wrote:

“It’s Memorial Day 2021, and I’m at the Veterans’ Memorial in Cleveland Park. I took the bus and arrived a few minutes early. I don’t mind because the weather is beautiful, and I’m content to wait. I glance at the faces of the other attendees. I don’t see anyone I know. I check my watch, and if all goes well, the ceremony will start shortly.

While waiting, I notice a large object covered with a tarp. It has been placed close to the veterans’ memorial, as if deliberately placed in its permanent home.

My attention is diverted away from the object when a veteran dressed in uniform steps to the podium and begins the ceremony with these words: “We are here to honor those who served.”

As the names of the fallen are read aloud, I stand with my head bowed. I feel tearful, but I don’t stop the tears from coming. I begin to sob when I realize that among the names of our military, are the names of doctors, nurses, retail workers, truck drivers, postal workers . . . There are everyday people. I think to myself. I wish I could have thanked each one of them personally.

To conclude the ceremony, the tarp covering the large object is removed, revealing a large marble slab engraved in tall block letters with the words, “We are here to honor those who served.”

Stronger Together’s next project will be a pen-pal letter-writing exchange. Each member will select someone from the senior center and write a letter. Letters will be picked up and delivered using the senior center van.

All of the programming developed during the time of coronavirus is intended to offer support to seniors who may feel isolated, and to maintain a connection to the senior center community that has played a vital part in the lives of so many Cleveland Heights senior residents.

If you are a Cleveland Heights senior who wants to connect with other seniors living in our area, or if you need any assistance, give the CH Office on Aging a call (216-691-7379) or e-mail ajenkins@clvhts.com.

Amy Jenkins is supervisor of the Cleveland Heights Office on Aging and the Senior Activity Center. She can be reached at 216-691-7379 or by e-mail at ajenkins@clvhts.com.

Local news that speaks to you

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Cleveland Heights - University Heights Board of Education

Meeting highlights

MAY 29, 2020
Board President Jodi Sourini and board members James Posch, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer. (All meetings are virtual and streamed on the district's YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/CHUSchools.)

Resolution to enter EdChoice lawsuit
The purpose of this special meeting was to discuss a resolution to enter a lawsuit challenging the state of Ohio’s EdChoice voucher funding, its administration, and its impact on the CH-UH community. For the 2020–21 school year, the EdChoice cost to the district is projected to exceed $9 million—about 40 percent of the state’s funding to the district.

Board members discussed their reasons for entering and supporting the lawsuit. They described how the present system is not sustainable, how the board has tried to address financial problems engendered by EdChoice, and how the EdChoice funding mechanism exacerbates the unconstitutionality of Ohio’s means of funding public schools. Board President Sourini further expressed concern that the present system does not allow a school district to remove itself from the list of EdChoice-eligible schools.

The superintendent and treasurer also expressed their support for the resolution. The board passed the resolution unanimously. The resolution is on BoardDocs, at www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx. (Click on BoardDocs in the left frame, select the May 29, 2020 special session, click on View the Agenda, and go to EdChoice Vouchers.)

JUNE 2, 2020
Board President Jodi Sourini and board members James Posch, Dan Heintz, Malia Lewis and Beverly Wright were present, as were Superintendent Elizabeth Kirby and Treasurer Scott Gainer.

Public comments
Recovery of taxpayer money: Resident Garry Kanter read aloud a Cleveland.com article about a state auditor’s task force recommend- ing the recovery of taxpayer money that the board had used to fund a voter survey relating to the March 17 school levy.

OSBA legislative platform
The board unanimously approved the adoption of a resolution recommending amendment to the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) 2020 legislative platform by adding the following language under the public/non-public school funding plank:

“OSBA supports legislation that:

• Requires all private non-public schools receiving public tax money to be held to the same accountability standards governing Ohio’s public schools including licensure requirements.

• Requires all private non-public schools receiving public tax money to be subject to the same financial reporting, audit requirements and sunshine laws as Ohio’s public schools.”

Before voting on the resolution, board members discussed their intent that the resolution put pressure on OSBA, the trade association for Ohio boards of education, to step up its advocacy for public schools during this time of attack by the Ohio Legislature. The full text of the resolution can be seen on the board of education webpage [www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx].

Five-year forecast
The board approved the updated five-year forecast, which Treasurer Gainer presented with related assumptions. He noted that revison is likely to continue over the next two months as additional information regarding voucher expenditures and projected revenues becomes available. Gainer reported that the Lay Finance Committee met on May 27 to review the forecast, and submitted requests for additional data. The revised five-year forecast may be viewed at www.chuh.org/BoardofEducation.aspx.

Superintendent’s report
Superintendent Kirby commended the staff on its hard work this past year, quickly adapting to online instruction and providing students with social support beyond the virtual classroom. She expressed appreciation to the community for its support of Heights High’s graduating class, and to the board members for participating in the multiple graduation ceremonies.

Kirby presented, for first reading, Board Policy 5460, relating to graduation require- ments. The state has changed graduation requirements for 2021, and the district is overhauling Ohio Department of Education guidance on their implementation. Dan Heintz pointed out that 2020 graduation requirements were also changed, from 2019.

Board members commended the superinten- dendent for her published statement on the recent deaths of Ahmad Arbery and George Floyd, the growing protests against institutional racism, and the importance of equity in education. That statement can be viewed at www.chuh.org/protected/Arti- cleView.aspx?spdy=6G0FQ100&daid=3Y21.

LWV Observer: Kathy Petrey

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HEIGHTS SCHOOLS

Heights Observer July 1, 2020
Teacher honors English-language learners

Ola Esmail and Kathleen Scully.

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher

Ola Esmail learned a new English word recently: bittersweet, referring to leaving high school and a beloved teacher.

“My favorite teacher when Ms. Scully came to visit me at my house,” said the 2020 Heights High graduate, who arrived to the United States as a refugee from Yemen. “But I also felt sad because I might not see her again.”

Kathleen Scully feels the same way. The Heights High teacher of English Language (EL) was so impressed by the accomplishments of her four graduating seniors that she drove from Summit County to personally visit their homes, deliver gifts, and express her pride in their accomplishments.

Scully teaches EL in grades 9–12. Her students speak as many as 14 different languages. She has worked with the students in a variety of capacities during their high school years, serving as their teacher, helping them with other coursework, coordinating their schedules, and connecting them to necessary support services.

Anjana Rai, Susmita Biswa and Anisha Pradhan came to Cleveland Heights as elementary or middle school students, after living in refugee camps along the border of Nepal and Bhutan.

Speaking for her friends, Rai said, “When I first came, it was so hard and so new. We had to get used to the neighborhood and school and society. We didn’t know we would get to this point where we could speak so freely and casually.”

“We are really thankful to Ms. Scully,” said Pradhan, “and to our EL teachers at Noble and Monticello.”

The girls have openly shared their Nepalese background with their classmates, creating Himalayan prayer flags in the MakerSpace, and performing a traditional dance in the school talent show. The three even volunteer to teach English to adults at the Noble Neighborhood Library.

While Rai, Biswa and Pradhan usually speak Nepali to each other, Esmail’s native tongue is Arabic. After more than four years in an Ethiopian refugee camp with no school, she came to the U.S. at the age of 16 and was placed in ninth grade. She spoke no English.

“I was so nervous,” she said of her first year at Heights. “I struggled a lot. Even in 10th grade, I needed to ask my neighbors for help. But I had Ms. Scully all along.”

When times were tough, Esmail would remember the years she had no access to education. “I made a goal to not miss even one day of school,” she said. “I did not want to lose more years than what I have lost in the past.”

Esmail recently received the Heights School Foundation’s Career Technical Education Scholarship for her achievements in the Clinical Nursing Program. She plans to attend Cleveland State University (CSU) in the fall to study biotech.

Rai, Biswa and Pradhan plan to attend college as well. “We are still in the process of learning,” said Rai, who will join Esmail at CSU to study biotech.

Krisy Dietrich Gallagher is a longtime resident of Cleveland Heights, a graduate of the Heights schools and a former Coventry School teacher. She is a freelance journalist under contract with the CH-UH City School District.

Teacher keeps students engaged

Adam Cottos with student Gavin Foss.

Liz Fisher

Ending the school year with three months of virtual learning is not what any teacher intended. At Communion of Saints Catholic School in Cleveland Heights, Adam Cottos went above and beyond for his fifth-grade students.

Though he was not able to teach his class in person, he managed to keep all of his 28 students engaged in daily remote learning, through Facebook presentations and hosting weekly Kahoot game nights for the fifth-grade families. He even drove to each of the students’ homes and hand delivered a personalized end-of-the-school-year gift.

Liz Fisher is marketing specialist for Communion of Saints School.
Library’s summer reading program moves online

Sheryl Banks

Due to service restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Heights Libraries has moved its 2020 summer reading program, Spark Your Creativity, online.

“We know how important summer reading is to our community, especially the school-age kids, so after we closed our buildings in March, we began looking for alternatives to our in-person program,” said Youth Services Manager Sam Lapides. “Luckily we found an online program called Beanstack that is easy to use, is fun, and allows kids to track their reading time and participate in prize raffles, just like they’ve always been able to in the past.”

Prizes include LEGO sets, headphones, and gift cards to local businesses. To sign up, participants can go to Heights Libraries’ website, http://heightslibrary.org, or directly to the Beanstack portal, http://heightslibrary.beanstack.org. Adults can also participate in Summer Reading 2020: Spark Your Creativity by signing up on the same Beanstack page.

“Any kind of reading counts, whether it’s a bound book with pages, an eBook on a tablet, or an audiobook on a smartphone—anything is fair game as long as participating kids, and adults, are reading or listening to stories.”

“We really felt like, this summer, it was especially important to find some way to keep our kids connected to us,” said Lapides. “Everyone is feeling isolated and disconnected, but especially the kids. After months of distance learning, and now with so few activities available for them this summer, we’re hoping that our summer reading program can give them back a bit of stability and keep their reading skills sharp.”

Just in time for the launch of summer reading, in early June, Heights Libraries began allowing customers to put books and other items on hold for lobby pickup at all four branches: Coventry Village, Lee Road, Noble Neighborhood, and University Heights. Families have been taking full advantage, with hold shelves filled with picture books, chapter books, and teen literature.

“We’re still here for our kids and families,” said Lapides.

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.

Library foundation seeks award nominees

Sheryl Banks

The Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries (FFHL) is currently seeking nominations for its 2020 Fund for the Future of Heights Libraries Honor Roll. Winners will be chosen by the FFHL board, and celebrated at a virtual event this fall.

The honor is a lifetime achievement award, recognizing those who have made a sustained, outstanding contribution to the Cleveland Heights-University Heights community by promoting literacy or by educating through literacy.

In the spirit of Heights Libraries’ tagline, “Opening Doors, Opening Minds,” the award recognizes both “door openers”—those who provide access to education, literature, and opportunity through literacy—and “mind openers”—those who stimulate the minds of community members through literature and thought.

Nominations will be accepted through Friday, Aug. 7, and should be e-mailed to Chase Klingenfell at heightschase@gmail.com. Each nomination must include the name and contact information for both the nominee and the nominator, as well as a description of the nominee’s relevant background and a statement on why the nominee should be chosen.

For information on joining the FFHL board, contact Nancy Levin at nlevin@heightslibrary.org.

Cleveland Heights – University Heights Public Library Board

Meeting highlights

MAY 18, 2020

Board members present were President James Russo, Vice President Dana Fuleihan, Patti Carlyle, Gabi Crenshaw, Annette Humphreys, and Viola Takahashi. Max Gerben was absent. Library board meetings are live streamed for the public on YouTube, and posted the next day at www.facebook.com/heightslibrary.

Library patrons to wear face coverings

The board approved amendments to the library’s Service and Administration Policy to require patrons to wear a mask/facial covering as long as there is a public health emergency. If a patron objects to doing so for health, disability, or religious reasons, a reasonable accommodation will be made, including (offering) services at a different location of the library building. Any behavior that is deemed as threatening others will result in the patron’s ejection from the library, and could be subject to charges under Ohio law.

Procedures with infectious individuals

The board approved amendments to the Library’s Service and Administration Policy as follows:

“If a potentially infectious individual is identified, staff is advised to request that the person move into our designated isolation area, do a mask if not already wearing one, and remain there until they can be removed from the library.

Emergency Medical Services will be called. Staff will not enter the area. Following their exit, the area will be cleaned and sanitized. Staff will be notified.”

Reductions in general fund appropriations

Due to the pandemic, the library expects a 20-percent decrease in the state’s Public Library Fund, which could amount to a revenue loss of $550,000, and a 20-percent decrease in property tax collections, which could amount to $1,580,000. In light of these revenue decreases, the board approved a reduction in the 2020 general fund appropriation of the amount in the sum of $858,000.

Staff reductions

The library has offered voluntary furloughs to staff and a voluntary buyout to staff, and placed 2020 staff raises on hold. The director stated that, in addition to the general fund cuts just approved, further salary cuts will be needed.

The board approved staff furloughs due to reduced work and budget cuts, and the implementation of the Shared Work Ohio Plan, which reduces the number of hours worked, in lieu of layoffs, for staff not furloughed. The board cut the salaries of managers and the fiscal officer by 10 percent, and the director’s salary by 14 percent. The salary of the facilities manager, who has been working full time throughout the library’s closure, was not cut.

Public service report

During the library’s closure in April, staff provided a number of services, including the launch of an oral reference service at all four branches, check-in calls to regular customers, virtual knitting programs, a virtual yoga series, virtual storytimes, Facebook live “Appy Hour” for technology needs, and creation of COVID-19 resource guides.

Summer reading program

The summer reading program for children and adults will be offered virtually using new software.

The director commented on how important it is for the library to provide a summer reading program in 2020, due to school closures and pandemic shutdowns. “Spark Your Creativity: Summer Reading 2020” will be provided through Beanstack, a fun engaging virtual platform on which to log reading and complete activities.

LWV Observer: Elizabeth M. Tracy.
Nighttown to re-open July 1

Myra Orenstein

Brendan Ring plans to re-open Nighttown on July 1 at 3 p.m.

Five days before Gov. DeWine's March 15 order that closed all Ohio restaurants that evening, Ring, Nighttown's owner, made the decision to shut down. He closed for the health of his employees, friends and patrons. There was no takeout. There were no deliveries. The music stopped.

As of July 2, Nighttown will be open again on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., with brunch served until 3 p.m., and dinner served 3-9 p.m. As of July 2, Nighttown will open at 10 a.m., and dinner served 3-9 p.m.

Nighttown also will be open on July 4, 3-9 p.m.

"The past months have been difficult from so many perspectives," said Ring. "We've had employees with us since I've been here. Having to lay them off, even temporarily, was hard.

"Creating a space with the required social distancing, and yet retaining Nighttown's neighborhood feel, has taken a lot of thought and planning and restructuring. And we miss the people. This is such a gathering space. We have so many regulars. We miss having them with us!"

For now, Nighttown's hosting of music, entertainment, and large private gatherings remains on hold. Ring wants to get the restaurant up and running prior to making a determination about those aspects of the business.

"Because of the current limitations with the number of guests, we've found it impossible to host weddings and business meetings," explained Ring.

Nighttown's re-opening will comprise its three patios (one is a dog patio), bar and restaurant. There is also a new 30-space parking lot adjacent to the restaurant.

For information, or reservations, call 216-795-0550.

Heights Arts hosts virtual opening and offers by-appointment visits

Greg Donley

To celebrate its 20th anniversary, Heights Arts came up with an evolutionary idea: artists who had previously been included in Heights Arts exhibitions would show one work from the period during which they first exhibited, and one from the present, thus showing how their work has evolved over time. The resulting exhibition, Evolution, runs July 10 through Aug. 23 at 1275 Lee Road gallery.

A "virtual opening" reception using Zoom is scheduled for Friday, July 10, at 7 p.m., featuring exhibition images and artist comments. Sign up to get the link for the opening by e-mailing exhibitions@heightsarts.org.

In-person exhibition visits will be by appointment only, beginning July 11, with a limited number of visitors per time slot.

Participating artists include: Pam Argentieri (jewelry, metals), Kevin Busta (furniture/lamps), Tim Callaghan (painting), Stephanie Craig (ceramics), Sarah Curry (painting and printmaking), Matthew Gallagher (video art and photography), William Gallagher (various media and assemblages), Lori Kella (color photography of artificial setups), Yuko Komura (paper and fiber art), King King (ceramics and printmaking), Sarah Kabot (cut-paper assemblages), Lynn Lofton (ceramics), Doug Meyer (furniture and metals), Brent Kee Young (glass), and Garie Waltzer (black-and-white photography).

"Heights Arts wouldn't have been able to host the exhibition community team.

Rachel Bernstein. "We continue to be honored to share their work with the community."

A virtual Ekphrastacy, with poets reading compositions inspired by the art in the show, is scheduled for Thursday, Aug. 6, at 7 p.m.

In music programming, Heights Arts co-developed Random Acts of Art LIVE, a summer-long collaboration with Future Heights and Classical Revolution Cleveland, to offer live music across the Heights community and throughout Northeast Ohio. These small-scale, socially distanced live performances might take place on a neighbor's driveway or sidewalk, on the lawn of a senior living home, or outdoors at a community facility.

Random Acts of Art LIVE also serves as an open call to musicians—particularly those who have lost income due to the pandemic—to share their talents during the summer of 2020. This unique program has been made possible by generous funding from the Angel Foundation. Private bookings are also available. Those who would like to host an event, or professional performers who would like to perform, can register at heightsarts.org/call-for-artists.

Heights Arts will begin welcoming a limited number of visitors, by appointment only, beginning Saturday, July 11. For the health and safety of all, Heights Arts observes social-distancing protocols. Guests should wear masks while inside. See dates and times available for in-person viewing at heightsarts.org, and call 216-371-3457 or e-mail heightsarts@heightsarts.org to reserve a slot.

Greg Donley is chair of the Heights Arts exhibition community team.

Heights Observer July 1, 2020  www.heightsobserver.org
In April, it became clear that the annual Pekar Park Comics and Art Festival, a summer tradition in Coventry Village, would have to be canceled or rescheduled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. While disappointing, the cancelation gave Adult Services Librarian John Piche and Adult Services Associate Sheryl Banks an idea.

“\nWe thought it would be really interesting to see how the shutdown would be interpreted by our artist friends and colleagues,” said Piche, who draws a comic strip, “Magnesium Sisters.” “Let’s see how our local artists are handling this pandemic, and ask them to tell their quarantine stories in comics form.”

Heights Libraries staff reached out to artists who had exhibited at the comics and art festival in the past, asking for “a 4- or 5-page story, comic, illustration, or photo essay of a project you have been working on while in quarantine.” The community’s artists delivered, and the result is “Quarantine Zine, Volume 1,” a collection of art and comics made by local visual artists during Ohio’s shelter-in-place order.

Artherton, also an artist, collected the work and created the publication, a 4-page, black-and-white zine that can be downloaded from Heights Libraries’ website, at www.heightslibrary.org/coronazine-2020-05. Featured artists are Bryn Adams, Kate Artherton, Lindsay Bryan, Francis Collins, Jed Collins, Paula Friedman, Craig Lindley, Sevita Lohan, Noelle Richard, and Christina Turner.

Artherton hopes to distribute hard copies of the publication for free sometime in the near future, when Heights Libraries’ opening is further along. “We were so sad we had to cancel the comics festival, but out of that disappointment came this really beautiful artwork,” said Artherton. “Now we have a creative piece that documents this time, and can be added to the Library’s zine collection—a small, silver lining.”

Sheryl Banks is the communications manager for the Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library System.
Black and white summer

David Budin

See that apartment building? It’s on the north side of Overlook Road, about halfway between Kenilworth Road, to the east, and where Overlook meets up with Edgewood Road and goes down the hill to Little Italy/University Circle, to the west. It’s big for a Cleveland Heights apartment building. It’s all one building, but it has three separate entrances, with a total of 37 apartments.

During the summer of 1966, when I was between 11th and 12th grades, I spent some time in every one of those apartments. It wasn’t because I was that popular; it was because I had the job of painting every one of their ceilings. I painted them white, standing on a ladder, looking straight up all day, getting my face and glasses speckled with white paint. And it was hot—no air conditioning in any of the units.

But it was still better than the job I started with that summer—riding a Checker Ice Cream bicycle all over Cleveland’s inner city—specifically the Hough neighborhood—starting every morning from its Chester Avenue headquarters, which operated from 1930 to 1990 (and is still open as a store). I worked around, trying to sell frozen treats to people who had no money, on a bike—or tricycle, really—that was made in the 1940s, with no gearshift, and with a large, heavy box built onto the front, filled with ice cream and ice.

That tricycle-truck contraption was very difficult to ride. And though the people in the neighborhoods wanted the popsicles, creamsicles, fudge bars, ice cream sandwiches and ice cream bars, most had no money. Especially the little kids. I wound up giving away more than I sold and I lost money. So after one week, I had to quit. I couldn’t afford to work there. But it wouldn’t have lasted long, anyway. By the middle of July, the Hough neighborhood was engulfed in race riots.

A friend’s mother was the custodian of that big apartment building on Overlook and she offered me the painting job. Each apartment took one day. I worked five days a week. So the job took a little more than seven weeks.

And while I was painting it white, all I heard all day was “Paint It Black.” The Rolling Stones single was in the Top 40 that summer, and that was all I could get that I wanted to hear on the little portable radio that I moved from room to room and apartment to apartment. Back then, FM was not an option, unless you wanted to hear ethnic radio shows, representing various nationalities, or so-called “elevator music” (so-called because that’s what was played in elevators). The only way to hear rock music on the radio was to listen to one of the two or three Top-40 stations in any American city. Which also meant that along with the Stones, plus the Beatles’ “Paperback Writer,” I got Frank Sinatra’s “Strangers in the Night.” And with the Troggs’ “Wild Thing” and the Temptations’ “ Ain’t Too Proud To Beg,” I got Ray Conniff’s “Somewhere My Love.”

But that summer, I also got to hear Bob Dylan’s “ I Want You,” Simon & Garfunkel’s “ I Am a Rock,” the Capitols’ “ Cool Jerk,” the Animals’ “Don’t Bring Me Down,” Sam & Dave’s “Hold On, I’m Coming,” the Yardbirds’ “Over, Under, Sideways, Down,” the Association’s “Along Comes Mary,” the Hollies’ “Bus Stop,” the Cyrkle’s “Red Rubber Ball,” Bobby Hebb’s “Sunny,” and about 25 more. The same 40 songs all day. And every half-hour, more news about the riots in Cleveland’s inner city. And in other cities.

They would also throw in a few oldies, like the Ronnettes’ “Be My Baby.” I saw the Ronnettes, Bobby Hebb and the Cyrkle at a nightclub show I could hear well, and a concert that I couldn’t hear, a great Stevie Wonder. Leo’s was one of the country’s premiere R&B nightclubs. Black and white patrons sat together and got along fine, even as blacks and whites were shooting at each other a few blocks away.

So, two bad day jobs, a huge concert that I couldn’t hear, a great nightclub show I could hear well, and three months’ worth of good summer nights, fairly safely ensconced in Cleveland Heights, away from the trouble, but not that far. It was an eye-opening summer. By the end of it, I could see black and white.

I say I saw those groups, because I certainly didn’t hear them. The screaming, from start to finish, was so loud that you couldn’t even tell if it was screaming.

That month, another friend’s father took us to Leo’s Casino, on Euclid Avenue and 75th Street, to hear Stevie Wonder. Leo’s was one of the country’s premiere R&B nightclubs. Black and white patrons sat together and got along fine, even as blacks and whites were shooting at each other a few blocks away.

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